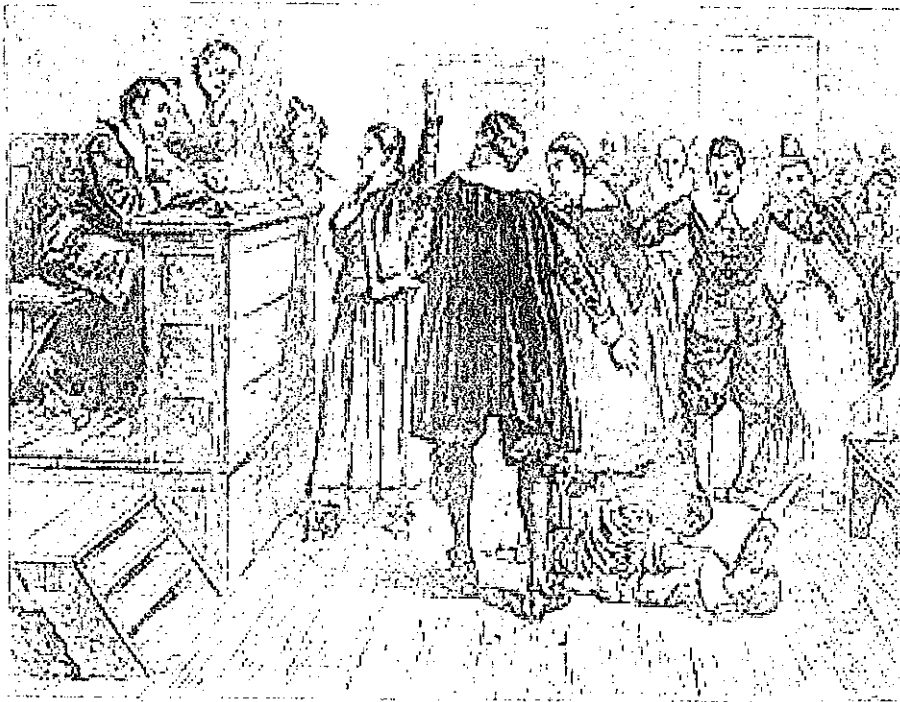


Connecticut Witch Trials Nonfiction Text Reader

Name: _____

Period: _____



Name: _____

Date: _____

Article Title	Nonfiction Text Structure	Signal Words	Central Idea

Grounds for Accusing a Witch

There were many reasons for how and why people were accused of being witches during the Connecticut Witch Trials. For example, a number of the most important reasons are listed below.

- At least two neighbors said they suspected you of being a witch.
- Someone already convicted of witchcraft testified that you were a witch, too.
- After you threatened or argued with another person, that person suddenly got sick, or their cow dies, or a candle led to their house burning down, or another unexpected event occurred for no apparent reason. "Anything unexplainable was blanked on witchcraft," said Connecticut state historian Walter Woodward.
- A close family member or friend is suspected of being a witch.
- You were born with an unusual birthmark that could be mistaken for a witch's mark.
- While being questioned, you get angry or contradict anything you previously said.

Adapted from The Connecticut Witch Trials: The First Panic in the New World

“Salem Witch Trials”

The Salem witch trials took place between February of 1692 and May of 1693. By the end of the trials, hundreds were accused of witchcraft, nineteen were executed and several more died in prison awaiting either trial or execution.

Puritan Superstitions

One of the primary contributing factors to the Salem witch trials was superstitions (a belief based on fear of the unknown) in Puritan society. The belief that Satan was present was widely held in Europe and eventually spread to Colonial America. This belief revolved around the need to believe in demons and evil that challenged God. This led to a perfect environment for the mass hysteria leading to the Salem witch trials.

The Influence of the Church

In the New England Puritan villages and settlements, all aspects of life revolved around the church. Therefore, residents were expected to adhere to the teachings of the church, such as attending lengthy sermons twice per week and avoiding activities that were sinful, such as dancing, non-religious music, and celebrations of events or holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. Toys such as dolls were forbidden and all education revolved around the Bible and religious doctrine.

Evidence of Witchcraft

Types of evidence included confessions of those accused and the direct testimony of an accused naming others as guilty of witchcraft. The presence of “poppits” (dolls), ointments or books on palm reading or astrology was also considered evidence of guilt. Physical traits such as a mole or blemish on the body also factored into deciding if someone was guilty. One important form of evidence was when someone would claim to see a large apparition, ghost, or shape of the supposed witch coming to find his or her next victim.

The Accusations and Trials

The combination of superstition, religion, and physical evidence all combined to produce an environment where accusations of witchcraft were easy to make and prove. An age of **hysteria** (uncontrollable emotion) resulted from all these of these factors. This led to a growth in the fear of witches. Puritans worried that anyone who was a witch would challenge their godly society, so they would put potential witches on trial. Because of the way evidence was accepted during the time period, many of the accused witches were put to death during the trials.

Before Salem, The First American Witch Hunt

Thirty years before the infamous Salem witch trials, America's first witch hunt hysteria swept through another colonial New England town. Find out about the accusations and trials that rattled Hartford, Connecticut, 350 years ago.



Depiction of a witch trial by English painter William Powell Frith.

First, in late March 1662, John and Bethia Kelly grieved over the body of their 8-year-old daughter inside their Hartford, Connecticut, home. Little Elizabeth had been fine just days before when she returned home with a neighbor, Goodwife Ayres. The distraught parents, grasping at any explanation for their loss, saw the hand of the devil at work.

The parents were convinced that Elizabeth had been fatally possessed by Goody Ayres. Later, the Kellys testified that their daughter first took ill the night after she returned home with her neighbor, and that she exclaimed, "Father! Father! Help me, help me! Goodwife Ayres is upon me. She chokes me. She kneels on my belly. She will break my bowels. She pinches me. She will make me black and blue."

After Elizabeth's death, accusations of bewitchment flew, and fingers were pointed at numerous townspeople. Not long after that, hysteria gripped Hartford, a town that a generation before had witnessed the first execution of a suspected witch in the American colonies. Else (Alice) Young of Windsor, Connecticut, was sent to the gallows erected in Hartford's Meeting House Square, now the site of Connecticut's Old State House, on May 26, 1647.

Witchcraft was one of 12 capital crimes decreed by Connecticut's colonial government in 1642. The legal precedent cited by the devoutly Puritan colonists was of a divinely higher order: biblical passages such as Exodus 22:18 ("Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live") and Leviticus 20:27 ("A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death").

After Young's public hanging, at least five other Connecticut residents met a similar fate. Later on, it was in Hartford in 1662, 30 years before the infamous Salem witch trials, that a witch hunt hysteria took hold, resulting in seven trials and four executions.

An Edited Excerpt from: “Under Connecticut’s Spell of Witchcraft” by Jaime Ferris

In the early days of colonization, much was unfamiliar to the settlers who came to New England seeking religious freedom. They did, however, have a firm faith in God, and a rejection of magic, the occult, and any person or persons who practiced black magic. In fact, New Haven colonial records indicate that, “If any person be a witch, he or she shall be put to death according to Exodus ... Leviticus ... [and] Deuteronomy.”

Witchcraft was punishable by death in Connecticut in 1642, and its witch hysteria occurred nearly half a century before the notorious witch hunt of Salem, Mass., in 1692. In contrast to Connecticut, Salem is more infamous for condemning its witches. Similar to Salem, though, Connecticut brought numerous suspected witches to trial, and also records the first hanging of a witch in New England—in 1647 of a Windsor woman named Alse (Alice) Young.

“When you think about witchcraft and the witchcraft trials of New England, most people make the association to Salem and the mass hysteria that ensued there,” explained Connecticut state historian Walter Woodward. “Connecticut was most aggressive in witchcraft persecution in New England, and a generation before the Salem witch trials.” Both witch trials and periods of witch craziness and hysteria have left important patterns in our American history.

Name: _____
Period: _____

Date: _____
Puritans and Religion

Puritans

About 1563 AD, some people in England decided that they wanted to follow a way of life that they thought would be more according to what the Christian God wanted. They called themselves "the godly", but other people called them **"Puritans."**

If they lived this way, Puritan people thought it would help them get into Heaven. Mainly these people wanted to live quiet, simple lives, spending a lot of their time praying, reading the Bible (which had just been translated into English), and listening to sermons. Puritans wore plain clothes and lived in plain houses. They went to church a lot (all day on Sundays and often on other days too). They thought that God wanted them to work very hard and be very serious. Puritans did not have parties. They did not listen to music, or dance. They did not celebrate holidays, not even Christmas or Easter. They believed this way the way to live to make God happy so that they could go to Heaven after they died.

Like other people who had different religious ideas from their neighbors - for example the Quakers - , the Puritans got into trouble in England. King Charles had some Puritans killed. So some of the Puritans decided to leave England and start a new town in North America. In 1630 AD, the first Puritans came to Massachusetts to start a colony called the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

*This article was added to and edited. The original document is from Historyforkids.com.
<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/religion/puritans.htm>*

Name: _____
Period: _____

Date: _____
Puritan Religion

John Winthrop (Excerpt from *A Model of Christian Charity*)

John Winthrop was a Puritan leader and a major figure in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He served as governor of the colony for over 20 years.

It rests now to make some application of this discourse . . .

1. For *the persons*. We are a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, in which respect only though we were absent from each other many miles, and had our employments as far distant, yet we ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love, and live in the exercise of it, if we would have comfort of our being in Christ. . . .

2nly for the *work* we have in hand. It [our task] is by a mutual consent, through a special overvaluing providence and a more than an ordinary approbation¹ of the Churches of Christ, to seek out a place of cohabitation . . . under a due form of Government both civil and ecclesiastical². In such cases as this, the care of the public must oversway all private respects, by which, not only conscience, but mere civil policy, does bind us. For it is a true rule that particular Estates cannot subsist in the ruin of the public.

3ly The *end* is to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord; the comfort and increase of the body of Christ, whereof we are members; that ourselves and posterity³ may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world, to serve the Lord and work out our Salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances...

[Some content from the original document has been omitted]

1. Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into Covenant with Him for this work. We have taken out a commission. The Lord has given us leave to draw our own articles. . . . If the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then has he ratified this covenant and sealed our Commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it; but if we shall neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends we have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnal intentions, seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us; be revenged of such a perjured people and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant.

¹ Approval or praise

² Of or relating to the Christian Church

³ Future generations

Name: _____
Period: _____

Date: _____
Puritan Religion

Puritan Beliefs (Article edited; originally USHistory.com)

Puritans strove to be honest and godly in every aspect of their lives, from conducting their business in the city to running their country estates. They thrived on constant community with other Puritans, with two sermons on Sunday and multiple weekday meetings where they could parse sermons, pray, debate and discuss passages from the Bible. Puritans believed in **predestination**, which meant that eons before the world was created, God decided the fate of every person who would ever live on Earth, whether they would be saved by his grace or damned by their sin. Nothing could be done to change this judgment. The work of the Puritan was to read the Bible, listen to learned ministers, pray, and consult with one another until s/he was opened up enough to God's grace to be able to perceive whether s/he had been granted God's grace or left to damnation.

The Puritans consistently pushed their agenda in Parliament¹ and from the pulpit². Many powerful men became Puritans, and indeed most Puritans were "full-fledged members of the class of the well endowed and well connected." (Stephen Foster) This meant that most Puritans in England at this time were either urban professionals (often lawyers) based primarily in London, where Protestantism had its strongest support, or country noblemen, like John Winthrop, future governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These Puritans believed that England's refusal to reform its church and its society was bringing God's wrath down on the kingdom. Every country, they believed, had a commission from God to do his will. To the English Puritans, it was only a matter of time before God realized that England had failed in its commission and literally destroyed it.

There was a real sense of urgency amongst Puritans in the early seventeenth century. Two paths lay open to the Puritans: work even harder to reform the church and save the kingdom, or remove from England entirely and thus avoid God's wrath. The Puritans decided to migrate to the New World to begin the Massachusetts Bay Colony in order to start of home and place of their own to avoid the wrath of God they believed living in England would bring upon them. They moved to the New World and began their religiously driven and guided society away from the English.

¹ English government

² The raised platform in a Church where the pastor or priest gives his sermons/speeches

Name: _____
Period: _____

Date: _____
"Puritans"

Directions: Work in your reading group to complete each step.

STEP I:

- Annotate for the main idea of your section
- Underline the Topic Sentence of each section
- Put stars next to **evidence** or **important facts** that support your section (one per lengthy paragraph)
- Circle any vocabulary or important words

STEP II:

- Complete the Puritan Information Sheet—you are the expert for your section. Your information sheet will ensure your classmates understand your content knowledge. YOU are the teacher and the book all in one!

Puritans

The Puritans were Protestant reformers who originated in England. Later they spread to the American colonies of New England. Their goal was to "purify" religion and politics of corruption. They were first called Puritans by their enemies. But eventually they adopted the name for themselves as a badge of honor.

The Puritans in England

The Puritan movement began as a part of the Protestant Reformation in England. In the early 1500's, King Henry VIII had broken ties with the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. His daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, continued to move the country toward Protestantism. However, some reformers felt that Elizabeth's measures were not extreme enough to rid the country of Catholic influences. These reformers came to be known as the Puritans.

The Puritans emphasized the importance of an individual's personal relationship to God and to the Bible. They wanted to eliminate all frivolity and decoration from the church. This included organ music, stained-glass windows, incense, and fancy religious robes. They forbade anything that drew attention away from one's inner spirituality.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

"Puritans"

The Puritans also wished to improve the quality of the ministry. They encouraged ministers to write their own original and inspiring sermons, rather than simply quoting from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Puritans were highly critical of England's established church. As a result, they were severely persecuted by England's king Charles I and his archbishop, William Laud. Numerous Puritans went into hiding in England. Others fled into exile throughout Europe. Others escaped to the New World. Eventually, the Puritans who remained in England engaged in a civil war. They were led by Oliver Cromwell. The Puritans executed King Charles I, and Cromwell briefly took control of England (1649–60).

Migration to the New World

In 1630, John Winthrop (1588–1649) led the first group of English Puritans to Massachusetts Bay in New England. They sailed on a ship called the *Arbella*. They were among the first immigrants to come to America in search of a better life. But they were not the "poor, huddled masses" known to later generations. Most were well-educated ministers, lawyers, merchants, and farmers. Many enjoyed connections to religious and political leaders back in England. The Puritans thought of New England as a place to experiment with new structures of church and state governments. They hoped to serve as models for reform in England and other parts of the world.

Winthrop was a founder and four-term governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He believed in **theocracy**. This form of government combines the laws of church and state. It emphasizes the greater good of the community over personal gain. Winthrop envisioned "a city upon a hill" that could serve as "a model of Christian charity." Other early Puritan leaders embraced Winthrop's beliefs. Among them were the ministers John Cotton, John Harvard (founder in 1638 of Harvard College), Richard Mather, Richard's son Increase Mather, and Increase's son Cotton Mather. They and their followers established churches in towns throughout New England. Sites included Boston and Newtown (present-day Cambridge), in Massachusetts, and Hartford and New Haven, in Connecticut.

Religious Beliefs

The Puritans of the 1500's borrowed many of their religious doctrines from the writings of the Protestant reformer John Calvin. Calvin also influenced the Huguenots, a group of French Protestants whose beliefs were similar to those of the Puritans. Calvin believed in predestination. By this he meant that God had long since decided who would and who would not go to heaven. Good

Name: _____
Period: _____

Date: _____
"Puritans"

Puritans had to have faith that they would achieve salvation. And they had to examine their daily lives for signs of God's disfavor. When the poet Anne Bradstreet's house burned down, she took it as a message from God to be stronger in her faith.

To help them develop their faith, the Puritans relied on three books. *The New England Primer* taught them the alphabet as well as moral lessons. *The Bay Psalm Book* offered English translations of the Psalms to be sung at church services. And last but not least was the Bible. To help them understand and decode the Bible, the Puritans listened to sermons at least twice each week. Ministers spent hundreds of hours explaining how scripture should be used both as a guide to daily living and as a way to predict future events.

The Puritans believed that the simple way was the quicker and better way to God. Ministers wrote their sermons in what is called the **plain style**. They wrote and spoke without using complicated words, distracting references to unknown books, or quotations in foreign languages. They also favored plain, black garments over the fancy, colorful robes of the Catholic Church. They held services in small white chapels instead of in elaborately decorated churches.

Controversy and Dissent

The Puritans of New England experienced many conflicts almost from the moment they arrived in the New World. Several notable Puritan dissenters, were ordered out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were exiled because they would not conform to the strict codes of the Puritan leaders. Some others who failed to follow the rules of religion and society were put on trial as witches. Some were executed. The most infamous examples were the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

It is one of the great curiosities of history that the Puritans—who had fled persecution in England—would themselves establish a rigid and intolerant society in New England. They warred almost continuously with Native Americans.

Puritan Legacies

Strict Puritanism died out in the mid-1700's. But by then many Puritan ways and beliefs had become a permanent part of the American culture. For example, the Puritans' resistance to centralized authority in favor of locally ruled towns and churches foreshadowed American democratic principles. Today's immigrants still share the Puritan dream that life will be better for those who come to America. The Puritan work ethic continues to teach that hard work and discipline will earn both spiritual and material rewards.

